

Flash Flood Safety

On average, more people die from floods than from lightning, tornadoes, or hurricanes.

Facts about Flash Flooding

- A **Flood** is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. **Flash Flooding** is a rapid flooding of low-lying areas. Flash floods are distinguished from regular flooding by having a timescale of less than 6 hours between precipitation or release of water and the onset of flooding.
- Flash flooding can occur miles downstream from areas of heavy precipitation.
- Flash flooding can occur on days with no precipitation too! Meltwater from snow and glaciers and scheduled dam releases can lead to flash flooding, and a dam failure led to the deadliest flash flood in US History, destroying the town of Johnstown, PA.

Be Prepared

- Check the weather regularly and know what it means. The National Weather Service San Diego Office is responsible for our area.
- A **Flash Flood Watch** means conditions are favorable for flash flooding. A **Flash Flood Warning** means a flash flood is imminent or occurring in the warned area. In rare circumstances, some National Weather Service offices can enhance the language in a warning to warn of a **Flash Flood Emergency**, indicating a severe flooding situation in densely populated areas.

Driving

- Water depth can be difficult to judge, especially at night, and you may not see a road that is washed out too! Remember: Turn Around, Don't Drown.

Outdoor Activities

- Before going out to hike, bike, or another outdoor activity, check the weather forecast and information about the area. Is it prone to flash floods?
- Have a back-up plan. After planning and travelling to your destination, it can be hard to decide to cancel your activity. If you have a back-up plan in an area that is known to be safer, you're less likely to put yourself in a dangerous situation.
- Watch for suddenly darkening skies or listen for thunder. Move to your back-up plan if these conditions start to develop.
- Remember that flash floods can occur suddenly, and miles from the source of water. You may not be able to hear or see a storm that can cause a flash flood.
- Have an escape plan and be prepared to ride it out, even by climbing a tree or other sturdy object. Some floods can take hours to recede, but even getting behind a jutting piece of canyon wall could protect you from the powerful waterflow.

